

The Soviet Union detonated its first nuclear bomb on August 29, 1949, leading to the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction, shared by both the USA and the Soviets. The unwritten agreement by the two super powers deterred nuclear war with an implied threat to blow up the world, if need be, to defend each of their interests.

I well remember the Cuban missile crises of October 1962, having been drafted into the military at that time. Mutually Assured Destruction had significant meaning to the whole world during this period. This crisis, along with the escalating ill-advised Vietnam War, made me very much aware of the problems the world faced during the five years I served as a USAF flight surgeon.

It was with great pleasure and hope that I observed the collapse of the Soviet Empire between 1989 and 1991. This breakup verified the early predictions by the free market economists, like Ludwig Von Mises, that communism would self-destruct because of the deeply flawed economic theories embedded in socialism. Our nukes were never needed because ideas are more powerful than the Weapons of War.

Many Americans at the time were boldly hopeful that we would benefit from a generous peace dividend. Sadly, it turned out to be a wonderful opportunity wasted. There was to be no "beating their swords into plowshares," even though history shows that without weapons and war there's more food and prosperity for the people. Unfortunately, our leaders decided on another course that served the special interests who benefit from constant wars and the arbitrary rearrangement of national borders for control of national resources.

Instead of a peace dividend from ending the policy of Mutually Assured Destruction, US leaders opted for a foreign policy of American world domination as its sole super power. It was all in the spirit of Woodrow Wilson's idealistic goal of "making the world safe for democracy" by pursuing a war to end all wars.

The mantra became that American exceptionalism morally required us to spread our dominance world-wide by force. US world dominance, by whatever means, became our new bipartisan foreign policy. There was to be no peace dividend, though our enemies were virtually non-existent.

In many ways America had been "exceptional" but in an opposite manner from the neo-con driven foreign policy of the last 20 years. If America indeed has something good to offer the cause of peace, prosperity, and liberty it must be spread through persuasion and by example; not by intimidation, bribes and war.

Maintaining world domination is based on an intellectually and financially bankrupt idea that generates dependency, war, loss of civil liberties, inflation and debt, all of which contribute to our economic crisis.

Saddest of all, this policy of American domination and exceptionalism has allowed us to become an aggressor nation, supporting pre-emptive war, covert destabilization, foreign occupations, nation building, torture and assassinations. This policy has generated hatred toward Americans and provides the incentive for almost all of the suicide attacks against us and our allies.

To continue to believe the fiction that the militants hate us for our freedoms and wealth may even result in more attacks against us -- that is, unless our national bankruptcy brings us to our knees and forces us to bring our troops home.

Expanding our foreign military intervention overseas as a cure for the attacks against us, tragically, only guarantees even more attacks. We must someday wake up, be honest with ourselves, and reject the notion that we're spreading freedom and America's goodness around the world. We cannot justify our policy by claiming our mission is to secure American freedoms and protect our Constitution. That is not believable. This policy is doomed to fail on all fronts.

The policy of Mutually Assured Destruction has been gone now for 20 years, and that is good.

The policy of American domination of the world, as nation builder-in-chief and policeman of the world, has failed and must be abandoned—if not as a moral imperative, then certainly out of economic necessity.

My humble suggestion is to replace it with a policy of Mutually Assured Respect. This requires no money and no weapons industry, or other special interests demanding huge war profits or other advantages.

This requires simply tolerance of others cultures and their social and religious values, and the giving up of all use of force to occupy or control other countries and their national resources. Many who disagree choose to grossly distort the basic principles shared by the world's great religions: the Golden Rule, the Ten Commandments, and the cause of peace. Religions all too often are distorted and used to justify the violence engaged in for arbitrary power.

A policy of Mutually Assured Respect would result in the U.S.:

Treating other nations exactly as we expect others to treat us.

Offering friendship with all who seek it.

Participating in trade with all who are willing.

Refusing to threaten, bribe or occupy any other nation.

Seeking an honest system of commodity money that no single country can manipulate for a trade advantage. Without this, currency manipulation becomes a tool of protectionism and prompts retaliation with tariffs and various regulations. This policy, when it persists, is dangerous and frequently leads to real wars.

Mutually Assured Respect offers a policy of respect, trade and friendship and rejects threats, sanctions and occupations.

This is the only practical way to promote peace, harmony and economic well-being to the maximum number of people in the world.

Mutually Assured Respect may not be perfect but far better than Mutually Assured Destruction or unilateral American dominance.